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ABSTRACT

The role of the teacher as a mediator of traditional cultural attitudes and the socialization of males in society were examined. A study was made of six male preservice teachers who were interviewed and observed in elementary school classroom settings to determine how their perspectives of masculinity and femininity were conveyed to the students. It was found that teachers are more than transmitters of cultural attitudes; they are mediators who interject their personal views. It appeared that the perspectives that a teacher has toward sexual/social roles are more significant in influencing children's views of society than is the teacher's gender. Schools were found to be dynamic social settings that reflect gender related perspectives, conflicts, and forces within society. (DG)

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MASCULINITY, FEMINISM, AND THE MALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER: A CASE STUDY OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

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MASCULINITY, FEMINISM, AND THE MALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER: A CASE STUDY OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

For a number of reasons (e.g. tradition, money, social status), few men choose elementary teaching as a profession. For years, many have recognized the need to have more men teaching in elementary schools. This awareness has taken on new significance during the last two decades as the feminist movement has influenced both society and schools. Feminism challenges many of our traditional social roles, and schools have long been seen as a potentially important factor in socializing our young people. To a large degree, the teacher is an agent of culture for children. S/he overtly and covertly teaches our children values, norms, attitudes, and ideas that reflect and/or influence the social context within which schools operate. Since male elementary school teachers would serve as an alternative occupational role model, an increase in their numbers would ideally promote a healthier and more balanced view of society to our children.

While the absence of men in elementary education continues to exist, there is little research that explores the perspectives of those few men who have chosen to enter this field. What perspectives do men, who are entering elementary education as a profession, have towards gender identity and the changing sexual/social roles in our society? Since teachers serve as role models, men's perspectives towards masculinity are of particular interest. Perhaps most importantly, in what way are male elementary school teachers' perspectives manifested within a given classroom?

In an effort to address these concerns, this paper reports the findings of an case study of six male preservice teachers enrolled in two different elementary teacher education programs. Several studies (e.g. Becker et al., 1961; Lortie, 1975) have found that perspectives are largely formed early in one's career. It follows then, that a crucial period for examining the development of perspectives is during teachers' preservice education. To facilitate this discussion, the paper is divided into four main sections. The first two provide a context within

which the study's findings can be presented. The first section addresses the role of teacher as mediator of culture, and the second briefly examines the socialization of males in our society. The third section presents the study's methodology and findings. Finally, the implications of the study's findings are discussed in an effort to more accurately understand the relationship between schools and society.

Teacher as Mediator of Culture

Sarbin (1954: 225) states that a role is "...a patterned sequence of learned actions or deeds performed by a person in an interaction situation." As an individual enters the teaching profession, s/he quickly learns that teachers fulfill many possible roles such as: observer, dispenser of knowledge, facilitator of learning, counselor, manager, and evaluator. One role that is often overlooked in teacher preparation textbooks and among those people in the field is the teacher as an agent of culture, one who consciously or unconsciously transmits societal norms and values to our children.

Although this role is not always overtly discussed, at different times in our nation's history it has been strongly encouraged. For example, by the turn of the century the influx of various immigrant groups had already turned this country into a uniquely pluralistic society. This heterogeneity, however, conflicted with the prevailing belief in the superiority of Anglo-Saxon culture. The primary institution chosen to meet this challenge, and thus develop a homogeneous society, was the schools. In 1909 Ellwood Cubberly, a leading educator at the time, expressed the then prevailing attitude.

> Our task is to assimilate these people as part of the American race, and to implant in their children, so far as can be done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law, order, and popular government, and to awaken in them reverence for our democratic institutions and for those things which we as a people hold to be of abiding worth (Pucinski, 1972: 76).

Naturally, the primary cultural agent within the schools was the teacher.

Numerous educators and sociologists have illuminated the way in which schools and teachers transmit cultural knowledge to our children (e.g. Apple, 1979; Friedenberg, 1963; Henry, 1963; Spindler, 1963; Waller, 1932). However, it is extremely important that we recognize the dynamic quality of this transmission. Teachers do not merely "pass on" an exact, predetermined body of cultural norms. In addition to transmitting culture, teachers also interpret and (to some degree) alter its quality.

> We know that education is much more the determined than the determining factor in human culture. However, to a degree, it is both. For civilization is not a dead mass of material which can be moved like furniture from the house of the deceased into the house of the heirs. While passing from one generation to another, civilization changes its character according to the spirit of those who transmit - for transmission of values is not just a process of "handing down," it is at the same time reinterpretation; it involves choice and selection; it is continual renascence....Thus, the teacher, who is the transmitter, must also be the interpreter, the selective agent, the reviver and regenerator...(Ulich, 1952: 21).

It is crucial to understand that teachers are not simply a vehicle for, but are mediators of culture. As mediators, they reflect not only the past, but also lead into the future. As a number of educators have noted (e.g. Grant, 1977; Lather, 1984; Postman and Weingartner, 1969), teachers play a potentially dramatic part in the development of our emerging culture. In recognizing this fact, we not only legitimate the power and uniqueness of individual teachers, but also become aware of the complex dynamics involved in the socializing role teachers play in our children's lives. As previously mentioned, the feminist movement has had a significant impact upon our schools and society. Keeping this recent social

development in mind, the question that arises is: In what way do men, who are entering elementary education, act upon their role as mediator of culture within the classroom? However, before addressing this question, it is helpful to briefly examine the socializing process of men within our society.

Male Socialization - Traditional and Emerging Roles

Teachers, like all people, cannot be seen as separate from the broader social world from which they come. In examining the perspectives of individual men who are entering elementary teaching, it is important to have some insight into the socializing process that confront most men in our society. Although our sexual identity is determined through genetics, our gender identity is the result of cultural influences such as parents, schools, media, and peer relations - an individual's socialization (Mead, 1935). As Hartley (1974: 7) and others (e.g. Brown, 1956, 1958; Faula and Smith, 1956; Gilbert, 1957; Goldberg, 1976: 172-182) have noted, "Demands that boys conform to social notions of what is manly come much earlier and are enforced with much more vigor than similar attitudes with respect to girls." While few adults seem concerned if a young girl is acting like a "tomboy," young boys quickly learn it is not okay if they exhibit feminine or "sissy" behavior. What messages do young males receive from our culture regarding their masculinity?

Traditional Gender Identification

A number of individuals have noted that in our society there exists a set of values which boys (more than girls) are socialized to embrace (e.g. Farrell, 1974; Goldberg, 1976; Pleck and Sawyer, 1974). This masculine ethos, though subject to variation and exceptions, is pervasive within our culture. For example, through various avenues (e.g. mass media, peer relations, school, church, family structure) boys soon learn that men are suppose to be: active (both physically and mentally), logical, aggressive, strong, competitive, leaders, quick decision makers, powerful, in control, visible, self-confident, independent, and

charismatic (i.e. a hero). Often the summons to adopt masculine characteristics implies a repudiation of alleged "feminine traits" (e.g. emotional, intuitive, sensitive, passive, cooperative, weak, dependent, humble). Boys learn that by embracing masculine qualities, they will be allowed to do something that girls cannot - live in a "man's world."

> In every known human society, the male's need for achievement can be recognized. Men may cook or weave or dress dolls or hunt hummingbirds, but if such activities are appropriate occupations for men, then the whole society, men and women alike, votes them as important. When the same occupations are performed by women, they are regarded as less important. In a great number of human societies, men's sureness of their own sex roles is tied up with their right, or ability, to practice some activity that women are not allowed to practice" (Mead, 1949: 159).

When a society expects men and women to conform to rigid cultural roles, there are costs for both society and the individuals within it.

Although these masculine characteristics give men more power (and hence more choices, options, and perhaps greater freedom) than women, there are often negative consequences in being "on top and in control." First, once a boy enters school, he is put in almost daily conflict with his environment. Numerous articles and books have illustrated the greater difficulties boys face upon entering the classroom than girls (e.g. Frazier and Sadker, 1973: 86-94; Goldman and May, 1970; Le Trippot, 1968; McFarland, 1968; Palardy, 1969; Sexton, 1974; Shaw, 1966; Werry and Quarry, 1971). The school code demands propriety, obedience, cleanliness, quiet, and too often, mental passivity. This code is, of course, in direct opposition to what boys are suppose to be like. "Many schools and academies are dehumanizing and unmanly places. Boys who succeed in them often do so by grossly violating many codes of honor and the norms of boy culture" (Sexton, 1970). This conflict between their socialization and their daily environment often

creates mental distress among many boys at an age when they are not able to understand what is happening to them. In addition, since most elementary school teachers are women and the school code often reflects traditional "feminine traits," some suggest that boys learn to resent members of the opposite sex, and that this resentment may plant the seeds of misogyny among some individuals.

While the need to actively compete in order to achieve, get ahead, and eventually succeed in this "man's world" may offer a few individuals great feelings of accomplishment; for most men, this striving to "be on top" results in feelings of insecurity and anxiety. Boys soon learn that they must be good at sports, smart, and before too long, attractive to the opposite sex. Failing to meet up to these standards can produce great feelings of stress in boys. As they get older, sports give way to a career, and the pressure to "have the right answers" and "get it on" with women increases (Bradley et al., 1971). Since only a few boys and/or men in any given social group can be "leaders," most have to deal with a bruised self concept. Many research studies have noted the high level of stress men suffer from in their attempts to gain status and be successful (e.g. Bartolome, 1972; Gari, 1970; Goldberg, 1976; Gould, 1974: 96-100).

In addition to fostering a high level of anxiety within men, their socialization also makes it more difficult for men to work through these feelings. Most men in our society are socialized to hide their emotions. At an early age, boys are told "not to cry" and to "be tough." Later, they learn to repress most of their emotions. The typical "hero" in the eyes of many men are individuals who are: "cool," independent, self-contained, and emotionally invulnerable (Collier and Gaier, 1956). As a result, men often suffer from self-alienation. Men tend to over identify with their external achievements and in the process ignore their internal experience of living. In their frantic efforts to create an external image of "being together," many men unfortunately loose contact with their inner self. As a number of individuals have suggested,

without this introspection life can quickly loose its meaning (e.g. Frankl, 1955; Watts, 1970). Perhaps for this reason, many more men than women die (through illness or suicide) shortly after retirement (Jourard, 1974: 21-29; Schmale, 1958).

These feelings of alienation are exacerbated by men's inability to develop intimate relationships with other humans beings. Boys/men do things together, while girls/women spend time relating to each other. Rarely do men receive messages that it is okay to be very close with one's friends or lovers. Men's ability to develop personally meaningful relationships seems greatly hampered through their traditional socialization.

> We (men) always needed an excuse to talk (e.g. an activity or object)....Talking personally and spontaneously involves revealing doubts, plans which may fail, ideas which haven't been thought through, happiness over things the other person may think trivial - in short, making ourselves vulnerable. That was too risky (Fasteau, 1974: 19-21).

While many men seem to have a difficult time relating to women (e.g. Bradley et al., 1971: 13-25; Pleck and Sawyer, 1974: 30-52), their ability to develop close relationships with men seems even more crippled through their socialization. Although boys often enjoy feelings of comradeship during their school years, for the most part, these friendships remain on a superficial level. Perhaps due to homophobia, men tend to look at each other as friendly (or unfriendly) adversaries rather than as confidants or loving supporters (e.g. Bradley et al., 1971: 36-38; Clark, 1972: 368-382; Michael C., 1974: 75-77).

> Though he (men) too has needs for dependency, he learns that it is unmasculine act in a dependent way. It is unmasculine to be frightened, to want to be held, stroked, and kissed, to cry, etc. While all of these expressions of self are acceptable in a girl they are incompatible with the boy's sought after image of being tough and in control (Goldberg, 1976:

176).

Even with the help of consciousness raising groups, many men feel that they are unable to open up to others (e.g. Levine, 1974). This inability to communicate and develop deep personal relationships increases men's sense of loneliness.

> If a man is reluctant to make himself known to another person...because it is not manly thus to be psychologically naked - then it follows that men will be difficult to love....Some men are so skilled at dissembling, at "seeming," that even their wives will not know when they are lonely, bored, anxious, in pain, thwarted, hungering for affection, etc. And the men, blocked by pride, dare not disclose their despair or need (Jourard, 1974: 26).

The result of this socializing process often leaves many men psychology isolated and crippled. Although men in our society do enjoy greater opportunities than women, on a subtle but powerful level, their gender socialization has been equally oppressive and limiting.

Androgyny: An Emerging Alternative

At first, the feminist movement seemed to be only about women: their sex roles, their place in society, their economic opportunities, and social/political freedom. Men saw themselves as either threaten by this movement or, at most, supportive of the changes it promised to bring women. However, as feminism gained momentum in our country, some men began to question more than just how our society affects women. A few individuals began to actively question their own masculine roles, and the socialization that produced those roles and expectations. For example, some have suggested that men's personal (as opposed to economic or political) oppression of women stems from their own self-alienation.

> Men have been afraid of women and have therefore dominated them, unconsciously, for very much the same reasons I believe that they have been afraid of their (creative) processes. Remember that the dynamic

> psychologists are apt to think that much of the relationship of men to women is determined by the fact that women will remind men of their own (creative) unconscious, that is of their own femaleness, their own softness, their own tenderness, and so on. And therefore fighting women or trying to control them or to derogate them has been part of this effort to control these unconscious forces which are within everyone of us (Maslow, 1971: 87).

In their effort to discount anything associated with feminine characteristics, men have discovered that they have cut themselves off from their full creative potential, and in the process, have prevented themselves from becoming fully developed human beings. Many of these individuals have begun to realize that their efforts to become "all man" resulted in their becoming half human. In response, some have joined support groups, and have struggled to find a new identity and a healthier way to live (e.g. Bradley et al., 1971; Farrell, 1974, Goldberg, 1976).

Today, both men and women are currently engaged in a transformation of gender identity. Singer (1977), for example, draws upon Carl Jung's notion of archetypes in her analysis of androgyny. In Jung's (1959) view, archetypes are universal and collective images that have existed throughout human history, and therefore their presence suggests strong, unconscious psychic contents. "(A)ndrogyny, in its broadest sense can be defined as the One which contains the Two; namely, the male [andro] and the female [gyne]" (Singer, 1977: 6). Jung and Singer are not referring to physical characteristics in their use of the terms male and female, but a form of consciousness. The anima (male consciousness) and animus (female consciousness) are unique and polarized, and they reflect our traditional notions of gender identity (Jung, 1959). However, rather than being locked into traditional patterns, Singer (1977) suggests that each individual has the power to develop the talents and capabilities of both the animus and anima that is within all human beings. In this sense an individual can become logical and intuitive,

strong and vulnerable, rational and emotional, confident and humble, powerful and weak, active and passive; and therefore gains the ability to draw upon whatever characteristics are necessary depending upon the given situation that confronts him/her. In doing so, s/he becomes integrated and thus fully human.

What is being suggested is that on a deep (and often unconscious) level we are neither male or female, but in reality, possess the qualities of both. However, in most cultures, men have been socialized to identify solely with the anima while women have been tracked into identifying with the animus. While this separation has dominated human history, it is important to note that the notion of androgyne is also considered an archetype. Zolla's (1981) historical research has illuminated the androgynous tradition as it has travelled through numerous cultures including: Shamanism, Taoism, Greek and Indian mythology, Jewish mysticism, and Christianity. Since it is our cultural socialization that has, to a great degree, determined our gender identity, Singer (1977) and others suggest that we need to move beyond this socialization if we are to ever become healthy and whole.

> The differentiation of the Masculine and the Feminine within the individual makes possible the flow of dynamic energy, the lightning leap between the positive and negative poles of being. Conscious awareness of these forces within, of their continuing separation and reunion, is an essential part of the inner development of the androgyne (Singer, 1977: 322).

Singer emphasizes that androgyne does not imply a static state of consciousness. To the contrary, it reflects a constantly evolving awareness. Working through one's socialization is not an easy task, nor is it possible to completely accomplish this task alone. While each individual must be primarily responsible for his/her own development, as a culture, we can decide to move in new directions or continue old perceptions and traditions.

As formerly mentioned, teachers play a potentially important part in

influencing which direction(s) our society (and hence our children's socialization) will take. Within elementary schools, men are particularly noteworthy since they, by their mere presence, offer children an alternative occupational role model. However, beyond this physical presence, in what way do men, who are teaching in elementary schools, mediate cultural knowledge towards gender identity to children, given the dynamic transformations that are taking place within our broader culture?

The Study and Its Findings

A concept of perspectives as it has come to be used in the literature, captures the ideas, behaviors, and contexts of particular social interactions (Becker et al., 1961; Cornbleth, 1982; Grace, 1978; Hammersley, 1977; Sharp and Green, 1975). Unlike more abstract beliefs or ideologies, perspectives are set in the concrete world of actual situations and have reference to a particular activity(ies). Perspectives towards teaching take into account how the situation of the school and classroom is experienced; how this situation is interpreted given the teacher's background, beliefs, and assumptions; and how this interpretation is manifested in action.

As previously mentioned, perspectives often develop during one's professional preparation. Accordingly, the study reported here inquired into the perspectives of six male preservice teachers. Our purpose was to gain insight into the beliefs and actions that beginning male elementary teachers developed towards: the gender identity among children and themselves as mediators of culture. After a brief discussion of the methodology used, three portrayals which emerged from the field data will be described.

Methodology

The methods used to collect and analyze data were those associated with field studies (Bruyn, 1966; Glaser and Strauss, 1975). This research approach was used because it allows for the generation of analytical categories which are grounded

in recorded data, as well as an examination of existing theoretical notions found in professional literature. This grounded theory research is free to combine a variety of data gathering methods in developing an analysis of social phenomena.

The sample group for this study was located in two different settings. After securing case histories of nine possible informants, six were chosen as the primary, although not exclusive, sample group.[1] Three students were enrolled in a large, southeastern state university, and three were enrolled in a small, midwestern university. Care was taken to include students: who were teaching in elementary classrooms (field experience); who seemed likely to be successful in their practicum sites;[2] from a diversity of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds; who expressed varied interests; and of different ages. These individuals were selected following guidelines of theoretical sampling - that is, on the assumption that differences among the participants would facilitate the discovery of theoretical questions, categories, and interrelationships (Glaser and Strauss, 1975).

Observations and interviews (both formal and informal) were the two main methods of data collection. Data were recorded in field notes during two university quarters at the southeastern university and one semester at the midwestern university. Each student in the sample group was observed in his practicum site at least once, lasting from two hours to the entire school day. One to three follow-up observations were made of four students from this sample group. Students were observed teaching different subjects within a variety of settings (large group, small group, and individual instruction). Rather than predetermining specific items to look for, a number of general questions were used to initially guide these observations: How is the classroom organized? What types of interpersonal dynamics exist between the pupils and students? What information, opinions, and/or beliefs are exchanged between the participants? More specific observation questions concerning their role as mediators of culture

were developed from reviewing field notes and were used as the basis for follow-up observations.

Interviews were conducted before and after each observation. Students were interviewed at least four additional times during the field work. At first, interviews did not have specific, predetermined questions, but were structured around various areas of concern such as: perceptions of teacher roles, the relationship between schools and the broader society, perceptions of field experiences, views about being a man within elementary education, attitudes towards feminism and the education of children, etc. As field notes were analyzed, more specific questions emerged and were then asked during interviews to gain deeper insight into situations and to clarify ambiguities. Responses from the sample group were cross-checked with other men enrolled in these programs.

Glaser and Strauss' (1975) "constant comparative" method of analysis was used as a guide for understanding the data. Throughout the fieldwork, interview and observation notes were reviewed daily. Incidents and bits of information were at first coded into tentative conceptual categories. As these categories emerged, questions arose that were used to guide further investigation into the field. The findings from these investigations were then compared to the initial categories. Through this constant comparison of data, analytical categories crystallized. Special attention was given to data that challenged original conceptualizations. In addition, the decision to address issues of feminism and masculinity was not made previous to the field work. The significance of these concerns arose only as the data began to be analyzed. This return to the data source, followed by modification and/or new generation of ideas, continued until the findings could be presented in some detail. As suggested by Glaser and Strauss (1975), the analysis presented in this paper takes a narrative form, using examples from the data to clarify concepts and to demonstrate the interrelationship between analysis and social reality. From this perspective, analysis is not a static product. The

data presented in this paper are not designed to "prove" the infallibility of the analysis generated. Rather, the goal is to illuminate concepts and thus provide a basis for further discussion and debate. Presenting the analysis in narrative form reflects its "ever-developing" nature.

The Portrayals

Each of the nine men who were initially contacted for case histories understood their unique status as men within elementary education. In addition, they all seemed to recognize (on some level) their role as mediators of culture. Each mentioned that, "as a man," they would probably be important role models for the children in their practicum sites.

The men in this study mediated cultural knowledge to the children in their practicum sites through both their interactions with the school curriculum and the pupils in their field placements. Based upon the data collected, three portrayals were developed. It is important to remember that although each informant generally reflected a particular portrayal, they were not locked into a pre-set way of being. In describing these portrayals, their lives have been temporarily frozen, and the reader should not forget the dynamic character of peoples' beliefs and actions.

Rick and Sam: The Traditionalists

In spite of the fact that they had chosen an alternative occupational role in our society, these men expressed traditional perspectives towards gender identity and the roles men and women play in our society. Their choice of careers can be partially understood from examining their case histories. Rick and Sam saw themselves as leaders and expressed the desire to eventually become school administrators.

> Most of the principals around here are x-coaches. They have had little experience in actual classroom teaching. However, that's beginning to change now, and they are looking for more people with classroom experience.

> So I decided it would be a good thing to go into elementary education (interview with Sam).

Sam's father was a school administrator, and he was following his father's advice in going into elementary education as an avenue into a leadership position. Rick's motives were slightly different. He chose to go into elementary education, in part, because of his religious convictions. Being a "born again Christian," he expressed strong desires to serve his "...fellow man." Eventually, he expected to teach in "...and perhaps run," a Christian school.

When asked about their status as a man within elementary schools, both had definite views. For example, each felt that it was important to present a strong male image to the children.

> I think it's (being a male elementary school teacher) particularly important for the boys. After all, most of their teachers are women. They really need a strong role model at this age. They need to see what's it's like to be a man (interview with Sam).

When asked, for a definition of "being a man," Sam and Rick mentioned qualities such as: being athletic, competitive, strong (both physically and emotionally), and in control.

As role models, they were particularly aware of their interpersonal relationships with the children and how these relationships reflected upon their male image. For example, Sam and Rick thought it was important for them, as male student teachers, to have a well disciplined classroom. "If we (men) can't control these kids, who can?" (interview with Rick). Sam, who was placed in a fourth grade class, made it a point to play with the "guys" but not the girls during recess, and for the most part, these activities involved contact sports (observation of Sam). For each individual, "acting like a man" was important.

> Rick (who was placed in a first grade class) was walking down the hall and a little boy in his class tried to hold his hand. Rick, however, quickly let

> go and told the boy to "move along." (Later he was asked for an explanation of what happened.) "Oh, that's Tim. He's tried to hold my hand a couple of times, but I never let him. If he does it again, I'm going to have to talk to him about it. (He was asked why.) He's got to learn that men just don't hold hands" (observation of and interview with Rick).

Not only was Rick's behavior determined by his traditional perceptions of what is "manly," but it never occurred to him that perhaps he was teaching Tim something much different - that little boys shouldn't hold hands with adults.

In spite of their own decision to choose an alternative occupational position, both Rick and Sam believed that women and men should play different roles within society. While they were in favor of equal-pay-for-equal-work, for the most part, they felt men should assume leadership positions within society while women should become housewives, teachers, nurses, etc. Rick was particularly vocal about this subject. During one interview, he mentioned that he didn't like some of the new textbooks that showed women occupying non-traditional occupational roles. From his perspective, God meant for women to be subject to a man's will. He explained that this is why God made Adam before Eve. He emphasized that men should respect women and listen carefully to their ideas, but that in the end, God intended for men to make the final decisions. While Sam paid little attention to the woman's movement in this country and felt it was basically ineffective, Rick resented its intentions because he felt it undermined the "...natural order of things" (interview with Rick).

Tom, Frank, and Mike: The Neo-Traditionalists

Unlike Rick and Sam, these men saw the women's movement as a positive force within society. Each recognized that women have been subject to various forms of oppression, and they viewed their struggle as an opportunity to improve their situation within society. However, during interviews, it became clear that, in reality, these men saw feminism as something strictly related to women. From

their perspective, the value of feminism is that it helped women become more like men.

> I agree with a lot of what the women's movement is trying to do. I think it's a good thing that women are finally able to be more assertive and get more opportunities in business and politics. After all, it's only fair that they get a chance to compete with everyone else (interview with Frank).

Each of these men were aware of their alternative occupational role, and each mentioned that they hoped their being in elementary education would "...teach the children that it's okay if people choose different types of jobs than traditionally expected" (interview with Mike). However, it is important to note that both Mike and Tom mentioned that eventually they hoped to go into school administration.

Frank's, Tom's, and Mike's attitudes towards feminism was reflected, to some degree, in their classroom dynamics. For example, each mentioned that as part of their teacher role, they should encourage the girls in their class to be more active, and they tried to give them more opportunities. However, Tom was the only informant who seemed to act upon these beliefs.

> Tom was watching the children play when Linda came up to him and complained that the boys wouldn't let her play in their soccer-baseball game. Tom went over to the game, and told the boys that anyone who wanted to play had the right to play. Later, he told Linda that he was glad she said something and "... stood up for herself" (observation of Tom).

Mike and Frank explained that they each made a special effort to ensure that both girls and boys were chosen for leadership roles concerning classroom responsibilities (e.g. being in charge of classroom clean-up, collecting lunch money, etc.); however, subsequent observations failed to fully support their statements. While it was true that girls in their classes equally shared in classroom responsibilities, this delegation of responsibility seemed to result

from everyone having to "take his/her turn," rather than from an attempt to equalize leadership roles among boys and girls.

While each of these individuals' perspectives reflected some sensitivity to female roles and identity within their classroom, none of them mentioned the need to alter traditional conceptions of masculinity or male roles. When traditionally masculine tasks needed to be finished, both Mike and Frank tended to choose boys over girls in their class.

> Mike's class was building a miniature greenhouse in the classroom as part of a unit on plants. When it came time to choose the builders, Mike only asked the boys if they wanted to participate (observation of Mike).

Similar to the views expressed by Rick and Sam, these men felt that it was important to project a strong male image to their students. For example, Frank almost echoed Sam's previous statement (see p. 15).

> I remember when I was a kid in school. I always wanted to have a man teacher, but it never happened until I got into high school. (He was asked why having a male teacher was so important.) Because kids need to be able to interact with men. Young boys need to be able to identify with someone of the same sex (interview with Frank).

Tom and Frank were defensive about being men in elementary education. They resented society's view that "...men who go into elementary teaching aren't real men" (interview with Frank). Both mentioned that they felt a need to project their masculinity during their student teaching.

Finally, although these men intellectually legitimated feminist concerns regarding our society, they made little effort to address these issues in their curriculum. None of these men taught any lessons that touched upon gender identities or sexual/social roles within society ever though each of them were placed in middle level grades (4-6). In addition, they often used the masculine "he" when referring to both men and women. When using resources that reflected

sexist attitudes or stereotypical roles, these men rarely asked the class to critically analyze them.

> Frank's class was studying pioneer life, and as part of the unit, Frank was reading Caddie Woodlawn to the class each day. He often lead discussions about the lifestyle of pioneer times based upon the day's reading, but never once mentioned gender roles within this historical context. For example, Caddie was as adventurous and active as her brothers; however, was naturally (for this time period) expected to grow-up into a "conventional" woman. The historical/social context of Caddie's portrayal was never discussed as part of the book's analysis (observation and summary of Frank).

When this omission was mentioned to Frank at the end of the unit, he said it was a good point, but that he just never thought about raising "...issues like that," in his class. When asked if they examined textbooks for possible sexist implications, these men said that they had done so in their education courses, but not during their student teaching. "It seems to me that most of the publishers already do that sort of thing for you" (interview with Tom).

The portrayal of Frank, Mike, and Tom reflects a mixed profile. In this sense, they were neo-traditionalists. They clearly recognized the value of feminist influences with our society, but their awareness of its implications for gender identity and curriculum content were limited. To these individuals, feminism only addressed overt behavior related to the women in our society and to a minor extent the girls in their class. Their views of masculinity reflected traditional conceptions of manhood such as achievement, strength, and a competitive edge. The gender identity of the boys in their classes was not seen as a concern. In addition, more subtle implications of gender identity (e.g. classroom tasks that reflected traditional sexual roles, feminist analysis of materials) went unnoticed.

Bill: A New Direction

Bill was somewhat unique compared to the other men enrolled in these teacher preparation programs. First, he was a little older than the rest. He had obtained a B.A. degree in sociology during the early seventies and had worked in a number of different settings before deciding to enter elementary education. During one interview, he mentioned being influenced by the anti-war movement, the woman's movement, and Eastern philosophy. However, unlike Frank, Mike, and Tom; these social movements had a direct effect on his own gender identity.

> During the anti-war movement I really began to question the whole military mentality I grew up with. (He was asked to explain.) Well, I guess I was a pretty typical American boy. I did a lot of fantasizing about being a war hero, played a lot of (contact) sports, did a lot of rough housing, and thought it was always important to "be cool." When I got older I realized that the whole John Wayne image of being tough, war-like, and always giving orders just seemed really sick to me. I like what Helen Caldicott says about our leaders often seeming like little boys with their war toys. When I married Ann, I learned how to get in touch with my own feelings. After a while I became more sensitive to other people and discovered that I could be nurturing as well as strong. To a large degree, I think America's notion of being a "real man" is pretty neurotic. From an Eastern perspective, it's way out of balance (interview with Bill).

As a result of these personal experiences, Bill felt that it was important for both boys and girls to get a more "...complete and wholistic view of what it means to be a human being" (interview with Bill). He mentioned that being a male elementary school teacher, offered him a good chance to present children with alternative views and opportunities.

Bill's views concerning gender identity and sex roles within society were reflected in both his interactions with the children and the curriculum taught in

his class. Like Tom, Bill considered it important to encourage the girls in his third grade class to participate in traditional "all male" activities; however, he also encouraged the boys to get interested in activities that are usually considered "woman's work."

> As part of an art activity, Bill had the girls and boys building models and sewing clothes. Some of the boys initially objected to the idea of sewing since they thought "only girls" did that. Bill told them that he didn't believe there was such a thing as "...girl's work, especially not in my class." Later, during an informal conversation with the class, Bill mentioned that he got a lot of satisfaction from working with Ann, his spouse, and that they shared responsibilities for raising their child and household duties like cooking, washing, and cleaning (observation of Bill).

While Bill's personal mannerisms and appearance reflected typical male traits, he made a sincere effort to balance these off and show kids his "feminine" interests.

Perhaps the most unique quality of Bill was that he took his concern for social ideology and interjected it directly into the curriculum. He would regularly examine the textbooks that were used in his class for sexism, racism, or other prejudicial implications. If he found misinformation or stereotypical portrayals, he made an effort to analyze these points with his pupils. While teaching a unit on careers, Bill went far beyond the typical content that covered the "types" of work and directly explored issues related to gender roles and identity.

> Bill had arranged for two guest speakers to come into class today. One was a female bank executive and the other was a male nurse. In addition to discussing the responsibilities, difficulties, and satisfactions that arise from their work; Bill asked them to present their experiences as alternative role models within their given work settings (observation of Bill).

Later in the unit, Bill examined our society's negative view of "housework and parenting" and then explored the skills, dedication, and hard work that this job requires. As part of this exploration, Bill summarized an interview with John Lennon that appeared in Playboy magazine in which he discusses his experience as a "housefather." While this unit covered topics such as un-(and under)employment and the structure of classes in society, the issue of gender was central throughout the unit.

Although Bill was a unique preservice teacher, his beliefs and actions are noteworthy. While small in numbers, the perspectives of individuals like Bill reflect an important shift in social perceptions within our schools and society.

Conclusions

Space does not allow for a full discussion of the issues raised as a result of this study's findings. However, three conclusions are worth emphasizing. First, the findings clearly illustrate the role of teachers as mediators of cultural knowledge, rather than merely the instruments of cultural transmission. Each of the informants in this sample uniquely interpreted their function as an alternative occupational role model, and as a result, the children in their classes received different views of gender and sexual/social roles in our society. While these men reflected traditional values and beliefs, some also reflected the emerging views as stimulated by the woman's movement in our society.

Recognizing this mediator role is important. Often, proposals for changes within our society are based upon unexplored assumptions, and as a result, are overly simplistic. The findings of this study, for example, question the notion that just having men in elementary education will automatically present a healthier, more balanced view of occupational roles to the children in our society. While Bill's perspectives towards gender identity and sexual/social

roles in our society exemplify the powerful potential force that men can play in presenting alternative views to children, the perspectives of the other men in this study do not suggest that the mere physical presence of men in elementary schools will stimulate such change. From a feminist perspective, the presence of men such as Rick and Sam would serve as a regressive force within our society. The real question isn't whether an individual is male or female, but what perspectives teachers have towards gender identity and sexual/social roles. In influencing children's views of society, a teacher's perspectives are more significant than his or her sexuality.

Finally, the study's findings can give us insight into the relationship between classroom life and the broader social context within which schools exists. Clearly the findings help dispel the liberal myth that schools are somehow "neutral and objective" vis-a-vis the social order of society. However, unlike some individuals who suggest that schools merely inculcate children with the attitudes and skills necessary for them to fulfill the needs of those who control society (e.g. Althusser, 1969; Gintis, 1977), this study's findings would tend to support those who argue that schools are important ideological battlegrounds where the "controlling" influences are not so easily determined (e.g. Bates, 1980; Giroux, 1983; Whitty, 1981). For example, Apple (1982: 14) asks,

> (Do) schools...simply...reproduce the ideological and "manpower" requirements of the social relations of production? Or do they also embody contradictory tendencies and provide sites where ideological struggles within and among classes, races, and sexes can and do occur?

The activities of the men in this study did not merely promote the interests of the "ruling class," but reflected the complex ideological conflicts that exist within our broader society.

Women in our society have been struggling for centuries, and within the last

ten to fifteen years significant new momentum has occurred. As a result of this social action, individual men such as Tom, Frank, and Mike reflect a shift in perspective towards women's role(s) in society. Bill represents those few men who have gone one step further and have altered much of their previous conceptions of gender identity. In this sense, the study's findings support those who suggest gender issues are as important as class in analyzing our social order (e.g. Apple, 1983; Lather, 1984; Wickham, 1983).

In particular, the findings illuminate the vulnerability of hegemonic forces within society. As Gramsci (1971) pointed out, important social change could be stimulated from within many different sectors of society and not just within the economic domain. Bill's perspectives towards gender identity and social/sexual roles, and the activities he developed for his classroom illustrate this vulnerability. With support from his cooperating teacher, Bill was able to stimulate a strong "counter-hegemonic" (Lather, 1984) inquiry among his students through his presence as an alternative occupational role model, his interpersonal dynamics, and the curriculum taught in his class. While Bill's actions alone do not represent a major transformation of society, they are extremely significant when seen as part of a broader feminist movement within our culture.

On the other hand, the concerns of Sam and Rick offer insight into how other segments of society are reacting to this emerging force. Sam, the most traditional of these men, chose to ignore it on the assumption it isn't very powerful. Rick, however, actively opposed it. His response actually reflects an additional power base that is also emerging within our society: the new right or fundamentalist christian movement. From his perspective, the feminism isn't a liberating force. To the contrary, he believes it will eventually destroy the spiritual harmony that God intended. Rick applauds those who are developing alternative schools based upon "Christian" principles. He supports efforts to weaken public education through tax vouchers so that people can "...have the money

to create their own schools." From his perspective, the "ruling class" is forcing a "humanistic" world view upon our children, and one of the most powerful components of this ruling force is feminist ideology.

One of the values of qualitative field study is that close examination of a singular setting can yield insights into the subtleties of social reality often missed in more generalized, quantitative research. In this way, our understanding of the social world can be refined. As Bowers (1982) notes, too often educators have overly depended upon abstract language systems in developing their theoretical understanding of our social world. This dependence upon abstract actors (e.g. classes, workers, etc.) has "...prevented them from testing their theory against the phenomenological world of people involved in concrete social and cultural relationships" (Bowers, 1982: 546). It is through the study of actual lived experience that our understanding of a given phenomenon will crystalize. Pinar (1975: 391) states,

> Theory (conceptual understanding), at least in part, becomes the rendering of experience into words, the translation of the private "lebenswelt" (human experience) into public language. It is, so to speak, the translation of practice into theory.

As previously mentioned, the findings of this particular study offer insight into the way in which schools reflect gender related perspectives, conflicts, and forces within our society. To assume that schools are separate from this society or merely mirror its most powerful forces is naive. Schools are dynamic social settings, and as such, they are ripe for investigations into our social consciousness. It is an investigation that needs significantly more attention.

Notes

[1] To enhance the reading of this paper, the following word guide is provided: Student- one who is enrolled in a college level teacher education program, Pupil- a child enrolled in an elementary or middle school.

[2] Care was taken to choose men who, from early field experiences, showed that they would most likely be successful during their student teaching. As Barrows (1978) notes, men often have difficulty in completing their student teaching. Their failure rate has been noted in both the United States and Great Britian. Barrows' (1978) study suggests that perhaps some of their difficulty stems from their participation in an alternative occupational role.

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